

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15
STR-07 CEA-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 PA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6362
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS PEPR, AR, US, UR, SHUM, OAS
SUBJECT FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES TO VISIT THE USSR

1. "CLARIN" JULY 2, CITING "RELIABLE AND HABITUALLY WELL INFORMED SOURCES," REPORTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES HAS ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM THE USSR TO VISIT MOSCOW ON A DATE YET TO BE FIXED, BUT PRESUMABLY BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. ACCORDING TO CLARIN, THE GOA ACCEPTED INVITATION AFTER A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF SOVIET-ARGENTINE RELATIONS ORDERED PERSONALLY BY PRESIDENT VIDELA. REPORTEDLY, VIDELA IS PLANNING A VISIT TO EUROPE NEXT YEAR AND ONE OF MONTES' OBJECTIVES IN MOSCOW WILL BE TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION IN THE PRESIDENT'S ITINERARY.

2. CLARIN'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMENTATOR, ENRIQUE ALONSO, NOTED IN HIS COLUMN JULY 2 THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS THE NUMBER ONE IMPORT MARKET FOR ARGENTINE EXPORTS AND THE US NOW RELEGATED TO NINTH PLACE, ACCORDING TO STATISTICS FOR THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF 1977.

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WITH ARGENTINA ENGAGED IN A TRIANGULAR TRADE PATTERN (SALES TO EUROPE AND PURCHASES FROM THE US) ALONSO OBSERVED THAT THE SOVIET UNION NATURALLY WAS INTERESTED IN CORRECTING ITS TRADE IMBALANCE WITH ARGENTINA. IN A COMPANION ARTICLE, CLARIN NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE INTERESTED IN PROVIDING THE TURBINES FOR THE YACYRETA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT JUST AS

THEY HAD FOR THE SALTO GRANDE DAM. IN HIS PIECE, ALONSO CITED THE RELEVANT INFORMATION THAT THE US EXIM BANK WAS NOT DISPOSED TO PROVIDE CONCESSIONARY USFINANCING FOR TYE YACYRETA PROJECT ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS.

3. ALONSO EXPLAINED THE ARGENTINE PHILOSOPHY AS BEING ONE OF PRAGMATICALLY SEPARATING TRADE FROM IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS. SAID ALONSO, IN ORDER TO GTOW, DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NEED NOT BE THE SATELLITES OF ANY POWER. THE OBJECTIVE WAS NOT TO TRADE WITH THE USSR IN ORDER TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE WEST -- PARTICULARLY THE US -- BUT RATHER TO DEVELOP ARGENTINA'S POTENTIAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAGMATIC OPPORTUNITIES AVAIL-
ABLE AND WITHOUT IDEOLOGICAL RESTRAINTS.

4. TO DEMONSTRATE THE NEW SENSE OF REALISM PREVAILING AMONG ARGENTINE DECISION MAKERS, CLARIN NOTED ECONOMY MINISTER MARTINEZ DE HOZ' RECENT TRADE TALKS IN MAIN-
LAND CHINA AND JUNTA MEMBERS ADMIRAL MASSERA'S VISIT TO ROMANIA A FEW DAYS AGO. AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE NEW REALIZATION AMONG GOA DECISION MAKERS OF THE POTENTIAL OF INCREASING TRADE TIES WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, CLARIN CITED A GROWING SENSE OF ISOLATION FROM ARGENTINA'S TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS, STEMMING SPECIFICALLY FROM THE MARITIME JURISDICTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBLEM WITH CHILE, THE CURRENT STALEMATE WITH BRAZIL OVER THE NARNESSING OF THE PARANA RIVER FOR ELECTRIC POWER AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM WITH THE UNITED STATES.

5. ACCORDING TO CLARIN, ARGENTINE-US RELATIONS "HAVE REACHED A MOST DELICATE PEAK OF TENSION." CLARIN OBSERVED THAT THE FAILURE OF THE GOA TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (IAHRC) WITH RESPECT TO AN IAHRC VISIT TO ARGENTINA WAS "PERHAPS KEY IN THE DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE CARTER ADMINI-
STRATION."

6. COMMENT: WE ARE SEEKING TO DETERMINE HOW THOROUGHGOING HAS BEEN THE ARGENTINES' REPORTED REASSESSMENT OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE USSR AND THE PARAMETERS OF THE GOA'S NEWLY FOUND INTEREST IN EXPANDING TIES WITH THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.
AT THE TIME
OF UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S VISIT FOREIGN
MINISTER OFFICIALS PRIVATELY HINTED THAT CLOSER

ARGENTINE-SOVIET RELATIONS WOULD RESULT FROM THE
TIGHTENING "US TRADE EMBARGO AGAINST ARGENTINA."
WE ALSO HAVE HEARD A SERIES OF BITTERSWEET JOKES,
PRIMARILY FROM ARGENTINE NAVY OFFICERS, ABOUT
ARGENTINA'S NEED TO HAVE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE SOVIET BLOC. EMBASSY WILL BE INTERESTED
IN COMING WEEKS IN DETERMINING WHAT DEGREE OF
BLUFF AND WHAT DEGREE OF SUBSTANCE THERE IS IN
THIS INITIATIVE.
CASTRO

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